8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

6. Impediment Arising from Failure to Carry Out an Obligation of Vengeance

628 Vengeance is a sacred obligation among all the Mountain Tribes of Caucasus.
614 If a member of the sib is murdered or killed accidentally,[183] if a member of the family is raped or abducted, if the sacred hearth-chain is violated, or if the sib is offended seriously in any other way, the injured party incurs the strict and sacred obligation of vengeance. Self-defense calls for vengeance, for in the eyes of the mountaineers there is no competent authority common to the offender and the offended, who might compel the culprit's sib to repair the injury done. The blood of the victim, self-respect, and respect for the ancestors call for vengeance. Usually the nearest male relative of the victim has the obligation to kill the offender or one or more of his sib, depending on the local *adat*. Although the vendetta has become more a thing of the past, it still does occur now and then in our own days. Even today reconciliation (bloodwite) is regarded as a disgraceful exchange for the noble blood of a member of the family and at [582] times is refused.[184] Blood calls for blood alone! Even today, if a young mountaineer fails to carry out his sacred obligation of avenging an enemy (regardless of Soviet laws), he may have to remain single for the rest of his life, for no respectable girl would wish to marry him.[185]

● [672] [183] If a passer-by is killed by a stone kicked down a cliff by a sheep or goat, the owner of the animal becomes the blood-enemy *(qanly)* of the victim's sib. For other examples of similar customary laws see Dirr, AGKB, p. 107. Even in our own days accidents may be punished by death. See A. H. Günther, "Zusammenstöße zwischen Gesetz und Gewohnheitsrecht im nördlichen Kaukasus," *Zeitschr. f. vergl. Rechtsw.*, XLVI (1931), pp. 332 ff.

[184] Günther, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

[185] Günther, *op. cit.*, p. 327. For blood-feuds in the Caucasus see the works of Dirr and Günther just cited, S. Karginov, "Krovavaja mest' u Osetin," SMOMPK, XLIV (1914), No. 3, and Berže, *Čečnja i Čečency*.